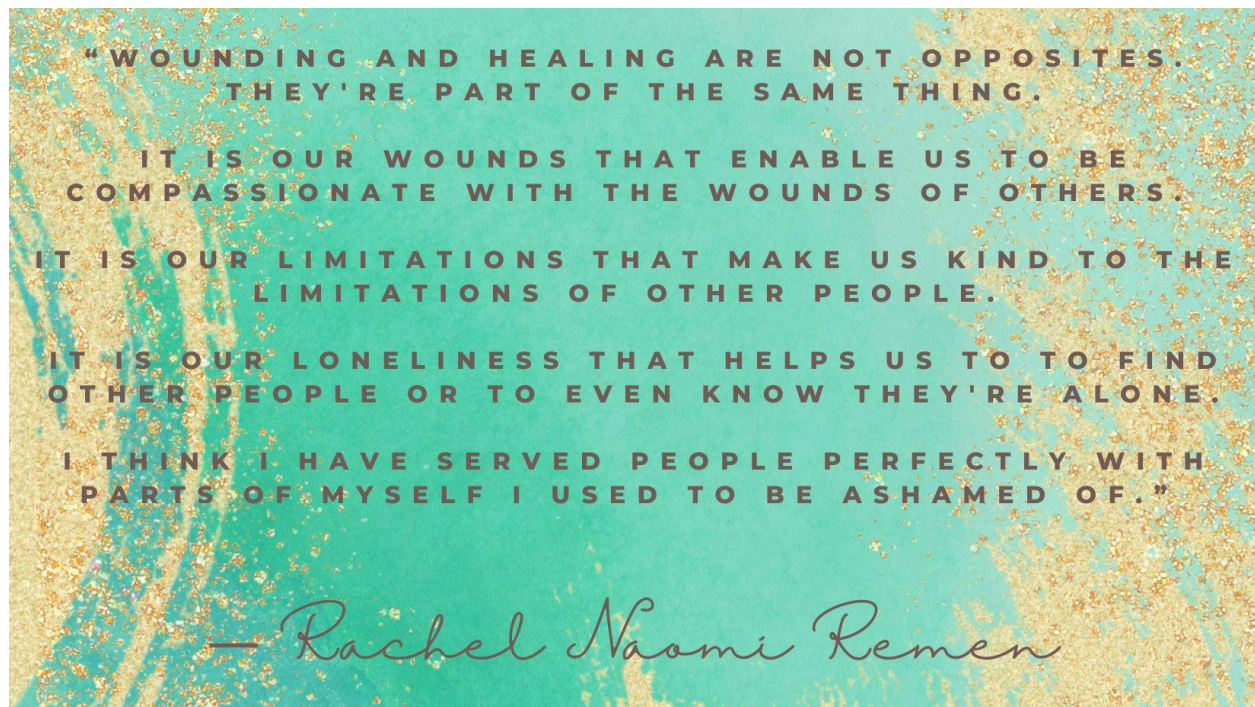




Resiliency & Self-Care Newsletter Winter 2023, Issue 14

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If I am being honest, this winter has been a particular struggle. Resiliency and self-care meant continuing to hold both grief and hope in my mind, body, and heart. It meant wrestling with anger, sadness, and shame while not blocking out kindness and assistance from those who want to give it.

Three and a half years of curating this newsletter as a beacon for each other as we organize, I still have to remind myself that when the light feels dim, in time, it returns. When hope feels distant, in time, it returns.

Included in this newsletter are rich conversations from organizers and activists wrestling with these questions: How did we get to this moment? What dreams can we carry forward as we build a world where all can thrive? What does radical care look like and what does it ask of us?

In the words of author John Green, “There is hope, even when your brain tells you there isn't.” So in that spirit, let’s dive in. ❤️

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Two recent podcasts from [Truthout’s Movement Memos](#) hosted by Kelly Hayes unpack these themes:

“In this year-end episode of Movement Memos, Tanuja Jagernauth and host Kelly Hayes discuss the cultivation of hope, how activists can practice reciprocal care, the importance of celebrating big and small victories, and how to process painful feelings without being consumed by them.”

❖ [Navigating Grief and Cultivating Hope at the End of 2022](#)

“In this episode of Movement Memos, host Kelly Hayes talks with Rehearsals for Living authors Robyn Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson about organizing and parenting amid catastrophe, and how organizers can build new worlds, even as the worlds we know collapse around us.”

❖ [Building New Worlds in an Era of Collapse](#)

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In this book excerpt posted by Mindful Magazine, Ali Smith, Atman Smith, and Andres Gonzalez share about their teaching and mentoring work bringing mindfulness practices to young people in their hometown of Baltimore.

“Learning to take care of your heart, to accept the pain that comes with seeing the people you love suffer, and to be okay with suffering yourself, is the true work of self-love — and it begins with the breath.”

❖ [You Can Change Your Life by Loving Yourself](#)

With six short guided practices led by Ali, Atman, and Andres, check out these videos posted by the Trauma Research Foundation that you can begin at any time:

❖ [Collection: Stress Reduction and Mindfulness with Holistic Life Foundation](#)

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In this recent conversation with journalist Laura Flanders, writer, disability, and transformative justice movement worker Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha shares about the founding of the Disability Justice framework, its intersection with all movements, and lessons we should continue to carry forward from the past three years.

“At the core of my work and life is the belief that disabled wisdom is the key to our survival and expansion.

When I say the future is disabled, I mean that as disabled people . . . we are imagining, in the worst conditions, futures where not only do we exist but we are thriving, we are in leadership, and we are sharing the tools that everyone’s going to need to survive.”

- ❖ [The Laura Flanders Show - “The Future is Disabled” with Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha](#)

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### **Further Resources to Explore**

*Additional podcast conversations to check out this season:*

- ❖ For the Wild Podcast - [Nkem Ndefo on the Body as Compass](#)
- ❖ CIIS Public Programs Podcast - [Kate Johnson: On Radical Friendship in an Unjust World](#)

*Suggested individuals and groups to follow on social media:*

- ❖ [Prentis Hemphill \(@prentishemphill\)](#)
- ❖ [Black Liturgies \(@blackliturgies\)](#)
- ❖ [Dr. Jennie Wang-Hall \(@dr.jenniewh\)](#)
- ❖ [Keeley Shaw \(@keeleyshawart\)](#)
- ❖ [Movement Strategy Center](#)
- ❖ [yung pueblo \(@yung\\_pueblo\)](#)

*Reflection questions for journaling:*

- ❖ [Tracking Your Energy: How Full Is Your Tank](#)

Current and upcoming books of interest (Find them at your favorite bookseller or reading app, or ask for them at your local library):

- ❖ **Let Your Light Shine: How Mindfulness Can Empower Children and Rebuild Communities** by Ali Smith, Atman Smith, and Andres Gonzalez, Holistic Life Foundation
- ❖ **The Future is Disabled: Prophecies, Love Notes, and Mourning Songs** by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha
- ❖ **Healing Justice Lineages: Dreaming at the Crossroads of Liberation, Collective Care, and Safety** by Cara Page and Erica Woodland
- ❖ **Let This Radicalize You: Organizing and the Revolution of Reciprocal Care** by Kelly Hayes and Mariame Kaba

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These quotes from the year-end Movement Memos podcast struck me as so relevant for this newsletter:

“We can also reach back out to folks who may have fallen away this year. We’ve been talking about folks really doing their best to navigate emotions and pain, and people are really processing a lot. People may have fallen away from their mutual aid work and other work because they really just are overwhelmed. This could be a great moment to reach out to folks you haven’t heard from in a while and just drop that friendly meme and how are you? And let me know if you want to do a Zoom chat or take a walk or whatever it might be.

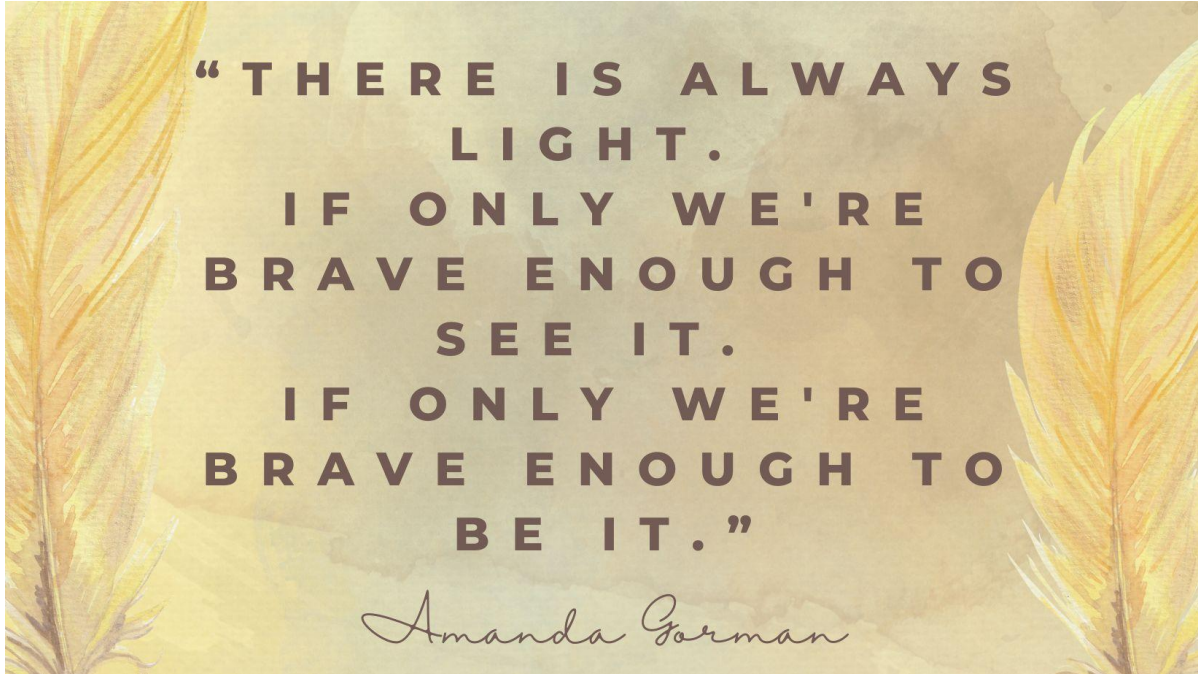
Maintaining that human connection, outside of any expectations about productivity, is crucial. Because ultimately, it’s not just what we do together that matters, but also how we do it.”

When you have capacity, please remember to check in with each other as leaders and members. We don’t always know or see what someone else may be going through. This is especially true for those who remain socially distanced.

And please feel free to reach out here. Share your thoughts and questions or anything else on your resiliency and self-care radar. Email us at [info@virginia-organizing.org](mailto:info@virginia-organizing.org). Keep shining a light and be a light for others! 🕯️

This Little Light of Mine sung by Fannie Lou Hamer | (Lyrics and History)

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Until next time, all the very best from the Self-Care and Healing Justice team,

Ronna Wertman,  
Virginia Organizing member  
Shenandoah Valley region

Meghan McNamara,  
Lead Organizer  
Portsmouth/Norfolk Chapters

Amanda Dameron,  
Waynesboro Organizer

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